

# GAMERAVE

ARCADE IMPORTS NINTENDO 64 PLAYSTATION SATURN

**OLD SCHOOL FIGHTING IS BACK!**



**CAPCOM GOES BACK TO BASICS  
WITH  
STREET FIGHTER THREE  
AND  
THE SUPER SF2 COLLECTION!**



**SONY'S NEW DUAL  
ANALOG CONTROLLER**

## **GAMES REVIEWED:**

TOBAL No. 2  
ACE COMBAT 2  
XEVIOUS 3D  
RAYSTORM

MANX TT  
MACROSS

STARFOX 64

STREET FIGHTER 3

## **LOST TREASURES:**

WE TAKE A LOOK BACK AT THE  
GAME THAT RE-INVENTED THE  
CASTLEVANIA CRAZE, THE  
PC ENGINE'S *DRACULA X*!





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## GAME RAVE

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Aren't we all creative underneath?

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### Special Thanks

-Diane and Marty of Microplay

-John, Bill, and the rest of the guys at EB's

-My parents for pretending to understand why I have 200 video games and no girlfriend.

-Everyone who picked up this issue. Good Move!

-John Woo and Jackie Chan.

The only films I like to watch.

-Square of Japan. FFXII is perfection. It also took 160 hours of my living soul to go through it two and a half times.

-Japan in general. Color game manuals, Anime, models, game sound tracks, Mooks, black Stunners and Justifiers, and ramen. They care, man.

The games, companies, and anything else are the respectful copyrights of whoever owns it. No bias is given to any one system, though editors are free to voice their opinions. If you're reading this, I love you even more! Now enjoy the issue!

## Readers? They're all the rave...

Welcome to the first issue of Game Rave. We the staff (you know, all three of us) want to thank you for picking up what will hopefully blossom into something bigger and better. This is an idea we've been meaning to get around to since the Sega CD first came out. At the time, however, we were misguided youth and pretty much just wanted to play, play, play. However, now that we're older, wiser, and truly into video games, the time is right.

Since this is the first issue, I'll skip the usual editorial blah and discuss what you can expect in the magazine. Besides the typical reviews and news, the following categories may also be found in the magazine:

Lost Treasures: This is where we take a look at a great game that was never wildly published, never made it over here, or is so in demand that you can't find it.

Ranting and Raving: If there's something bugging an editor, or something that he can't put down, this is a spot where he gets to voice his opinion.

Rave Review: True to our name sake, this is the 'Game of the Month'.

Grave Review: This is the 'Worst Game of the Month'.

Objects in the mirror...: This is where we take a look back at a gaming's past and see what was and wasn't hot.

I'd also like to take mention of the magazine's layout. As you'll see, there aren't that many screen shots. Most pictures are cover scans or downloaded art work. This is for several reasons. First, we're just starting out. Most of the magazine's budget is going to the games and the making of the mag. Also, because we're working in black and white (bubble jet, no less) we don't want to ruin a game's image by reducing it to low printing standards. No, we are more dedicated to text and review quality, not graphic appeal. Because we can not accurately *show* you the game, we want to accurately *tell* you how the game is. As the issues go on, and our distribution gets bigger (tell your friends, write to us, tell your neighbors, etc) and if we have a big enough audience, we'll start pricing the mag, so that we can use the money to make it bigger, badder, and better (wow, a NEO GEO plug!). Also with help from you, the reader, we'll know what to do and how you want it done. This magazine is for you, the gaming world, and we want to be a part of your gaming world.

So please, take an issue, pass it on to a friend when your done, and so forth. Write what you think of us and tell us. Send your comments, ideas, critiques, free gifts, or anything else you can think of to:

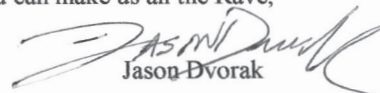
### GAME RAVE

### Letters to the Goofy Editor

Just please type or clearly print it, all these years of gaming are killing my eyes. Or if you have net access, please e-mail us and tell us. The e-mail addresses of Melon and Konani are on the back page.

With that, I leave the rest of the magazine to you. Enjoy the issue, and please, be gentle. It's our first time.

You can make us all the Rave,

  
Jason Dvorak



# RAVE NEWS

## Sony Releases Newest Controller

With all the hype that Nintendo gave it's controller about being 'revolutionary', it's no surprise that Sega and Sony would try and top it. Sega was the first to release their version of an analog controller, the *Nights 3D Pad*. The controller was easier to hold than Nintendo's, and the analog was made a pad, instead of Nintendo's stick version. Packaged with and without *Nights*, it became one of the system's better accessories. It was only a matter of time before Sony took their turn.

Enter the double analog controller.

Released in Japan at the same time as *Tobal No. 2*, the controller is a welcome sight and a much more worthy addition than Sony's previous attempt, the flight stick.

The controller is slightly larger than the standard pad, with the bigger L2 and R2 buttons being at a angle at the bottom of the controller. The two analog pads fit comfortably inbetween the D pad and fire buttons. The mode switch, located between the two pads, toggles between the controller's three different configurations; normal, analog, and flight stick.

Making it flight stick compatible wasn't the only step Sony took in making it better than the competition. Hot on Nintendo's heels, the controller has a built in rumble pack! This is a little gizmo that when your on screen persona is hit, the controller vibrates. A neat gimmick that will hopefully stay in the gaming world for a while.

But does it work? After a ton of testing, the answer is more yes than no. The analog sticks are very comfortable, and need little adjusting of the hands on the player's part. It also feels more balanced than when using the N64's lopsided design. In most games, the left analog is used for movement, with the right stick is left for specific game purposes. The sticks moved effortlessly and smoothly, regardless of the game. The first problem is that on certain games, the analog was too sensitive. In *Mechwarrior 2* and *Motortoon*, if you made a turn, and then over compensated by the slightest margin on the way back, the car/mech would still go in that direction, even with the stick at neutral. This however, is more player fault than controller, but that fact that it can get that sensitive could drive some players crazy. The other problem that persisted was a minute one. In games like *Tobal 2*, where you must press the start/select button for a menu, I'd press the analog button instead(seeing how it's located in the select button's original height. Again, only a teeny problem, but one I noticed a few others having.

Then, pumped with adreniline and craving for *Rage Racer*, I plopped it in and grabbed my analog. And hit the wall.

The analog didn't work.

And thus we have the one glaring flaw of the controller. The pad's flight stick mode runs off an emulator(i.e. the pad itself is programmed to work like the stick). The analog mode is based in four steering directions. Games like *Rage Racer*, *Formula 1*, and so forth are based on a two direction(left and right) steering set up. The analog has no emulator for this.

Now, while this kills me, it becomes obvious why it's not compatible; the NeGcon. Sony probably didn't want to stifle the sales



Sony's ready to take control with their dual analog controller. Is it awesome? Read the review to find out!

of their adopted company's controller. That and the fact that you need two analog controllers means more money for them. Doh!

The rumble pack has the same hitch. The rumble will only work with games it was programmed for like *Tobal 2*, *Ace Combat 2*, *Rally Cross*, etc(but then, the same goes for N64's). It rumbles at various strengths, depending on what exactly hits you in the game. *Rally Cross* wins the award for hardest hit, while *Ace 2* had the most variations.

So is it worth it? In my opinion, yes. The controller is still one of the finest I've ever used. The games it works with, it works beautifully. And the fact that there's already 3 freaking awesome games that were released with it, I can only dream of what else those Sony companies have up their sleeves.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** The internal rumble pack may not make it to the states! It seems Atari(?) owns the rights/patent in America on 'internal vibrating' controllers, and refuses to let Sony release it as is. If Sony can't figure a way to make it external(like Nintendo's), the rumble will be import only! If this stay's true, not only will it be a bummer of a loss to U.S. PSX gamers, but it'll be one hell of a collector's item. Great, even from the grave Atari is still screwing gamers over...

**Sony Dual Analog Controller** Overall Rating: B+  
Available: Now (IMPORT), September(USA)



## Such Large Combos You Have, Grandma..

Capcom recently began promoting two of their newest coin-ops at the Capcom of Japan web-site (<http://www.capcom.co.jp>). *Vampire Savior*, running on the CPS II hardware and *Battle Circuit* (I don't know what its running on at present). Both look like quality titles but neither may make it to these shores as coin-op machines.

*Vampire Savior* is of course the sequel to the awesome *Vampire Hunter* and *Vampire*, which is known as *Darkstalkers/Nightwarriors* in the U.S. It features several new characters including Jedah (a big bad mean dude), a little-red riding hood wanna-be with a sub-machine gun, Q. Bee, a female human bee, and Morrigan's little sister. The more succubi (go look this word up in the dictionary right now because you'll thank me after your dreams suddenly get **much**, much better) the better, being the theory at play here.

*Battle Circuit* looks like an evolved *Final Fight* with multi-player capability and *Street Fighter* esque moves. The screen shots look nice but somehow this game has not got me very excited.

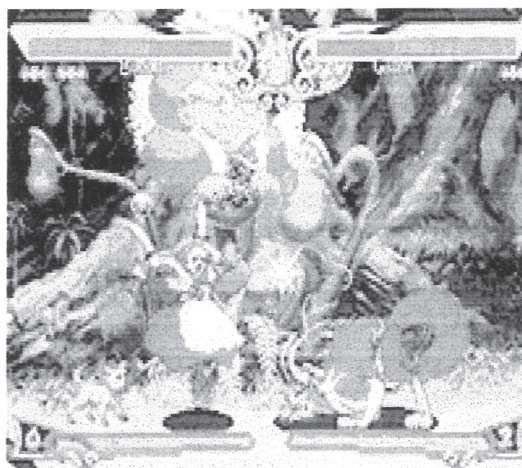
In a surprise move, Capcom recently announced *Pocket Fighter* (gosh, if E3 was really a big deal wouldn't it have been nice if Capcom had decided to debut a *Street Fighter* game at the show instead of two days after it?) which is the *Puzzle Fighter* crew in hand to hand combat. *Pocket Fighters* uses a power-up system in which characters collect gems by puttin' da smack down on their opponents (kind of like the Infiniti gems in *Marvel Super Heroes*) and then using them to unleash super powerful moves. *Pocket Fighter* will appear on the PSX and Saturn after debuting in arcades this fall.

Over at the Sega camp, three new model three games are being prepared. In addition to *The Lost World* shooter, we will see *Le Mans 24* by AM3 and *Moto Racer* by AM1. *Le Mans* is another driving game with, can you guess, racecars! *Moto Racer* on the other hand is similar to *Manx TT* except you can erm... try and beat up fellow riders while on your motor bike. As a motorcycle rider (and after the brilliant *Manx TT*) I find this concept incredibly lame! Oh well, you do get to sit on the bikes and lean and it does have an eight player hook-up option. If only an arcade operator (outside of Japan) could afford such a set-up we'd be in business! Have to sneak this in here so Danger Boy won't notice it(I did...DB). Have you seen the Saturn shots of *Sega's Touring Car Championship*? Can you say bye-bye, *Rage Racer*?. I really can't believe this is on Saturn. First, *Last Bronx* and now this...

-konani



A typical Japanese Anime Style Poster advertising the game Vampire Savior.



Little Red Riding hood takes on the big bad wolf in Capcom's newest.



## COVER FEATURE



# Street Fighter III

Is the 3rd time around the charm?

Six years ago, Capcom dropped the bomb. A game that re-wrote the rules and video game history. And unless you've been living under a NES for the last six years you know that I am referring to *Street Fighter II*. Now, it is 1997 and we have been bombarded with fighting games both from Capcom and countless clones. But *Street Fighter III* was not to be seen, until now. Now after six years of anticipation it is here. Was it worth the wait? Quite simply, no. But it IS the best fighting game ever and if you don't believe me you probably like *Time Killers* and dig FMV games.

What are the flaws of *Street Fighter III*? To be frank, the character designs are very mediocre. (At this point I must admit that I also did not favor the artist's style for the character designs.) Of course Ken and Ryu are a given, Ibuki is gorgeous, and Alex was an inspired character. However, the rest of 3's crew are a joke. Dudley reminds me of a cross between Ken and Balrog. Yun and Yang were a good idea but they are just uninspirational characters and clones at that. Sean is an average character but there are all ready way too many Ken/Ryu clones in the world today. Oro and Necro are a joke and very few players use either one of these characters. Likewise, Elena is unique but difficult to play and not that interesting. Then there's the end boss, Gil. He sucks. Gil is a cross between the following: Rainbow Bright, Fabio, and Two-Face. I am still at a loss as to why Capcom included him in the game. To top it off, Capcom knows better than to put only 10 playable characters into such an important game. Shame on you boys (and ninas)!

Secondly, background designs are also very average for a *Street Fighter* sequel. I really enjoyed Ibuki's, Elena's, and Ryu's backgrounds. Alex's is not bad, but you could take the rest back. My problem with most of the backgrounds is the lack of animation, diversity, and hidden Capcom characters cheering the combatants on. The super-art screen is alright but

I've seen better FX on home systems.

But this is indeed a *Street Fighter* game and it has the goods to back up the name. *SF 3*'s gameplay has been polished to near perfection. This game brought a good deal of strategy back to the series (as opposed to the combo mad *X-Men* type games). The lack of air blocking in this title added to the playability and was a good choice on Capcom's part. Parrying is a brilliant addition to the engine and really adds a whole new level of technique. Chooseable super-arts are also very groovy, even though I wish you could switch between every round. Super-jumps are pretty useless and I wish the dashes had a longer range but overall gameplay has been improved. Good *SF2* players have plenty to re-learn to become masters of *SF3*. The only fault with the AI is that Gil is one tough motha' and if you want to see an ending you have to earn it. (Some are worth it, others...) But I won't ruin any of them except to say that Ryu heads off toward....

Capcom's new CPS III boards do a superior job of providing the animation and the fighters

animate like Disney movies.

There is plenty more to be tapped out of this hardware and subsequent releases should showcase its true potential.

So why was I disappointed with *SF III*? Capcom is capable of more, especially considering a six year development window. This was not a worthy follow up to *Street Fighter II* but then again I don't know if anything could be. Expectations were super high, but still, Capcom could have done better. In fact, they admitted this and have supposedly set high standards for *Street Fighter IV*, which is already in development. Three needed more characters, better characters, dynamite backgrounds, a further distinction between the styles of Ken and Ryu, air escape moves (i.e. air hurricane kicks), and more innovation to distinguish it as a successor to *Street Fighter II*. With that said, this is the best fighting game (as far as technique, strategy, and gameplay are concerned) available in the world today. If you have bonded with a new character (Ibuki!) it's a totally awesome game and should by no means be passed up by any gamer. As an arcade game it earns a 92 but as a *Street Fighter* game it earns an 84. Split the difference and *SF 3* receives an 88. The home conversion will score higher. Until then, *Shoryuken!*

### *Street Fighter III*

Capcom

1-2 Players

Arcade

PS and Saturn versions planned

Overall Review: 88%

-Konani





# COVER FEATURE



**2D or not 2D? For Capcom, there is no question.**

## Street Fighter Collections Preview

At E3, Capcom announced the *Street Fighter Collections* set which is due for a September launch in the U.S. At present, the set will include: *Super Street Fighter II*, *Super Street Fighter II Turbo*, and *Street Fighter Alpha 2 Gold*. Gold is the (previously) Japanese only release of the slightly upgraded *Street Fighter Zero(Alpha) 2*. It supposedly contains a few new moves, extra frames of animation not found in the original, and some new two player vs the computer options to play out your favorite scenes from the *Street Fighter II* Movie anime. *Street Fighter Collections* is priced for value, according to Capcom, and will retail for only \$39.95 on both the Saturn and PSX formats.

While I can not wait for this release, I wish the set had all five of the *Street Fighter II* games instead of the Super Variants and Gold. The SF 2 series is really only two games: SF 2 and it's two upgrades and SSF2 and it's Turbo upgrade. It wouldn't have been a big chore for Capcom to include all of these games but then what would be there be for the *Street Fighter Collections Disk II* (or SFC Turbo, take your pick)?

On the brighter side of things, both of the SSF2 games should be pixel perfect (which the 3DO version wasn't) and a fine addition to anyone's library especially at Capcom's value price point. This should hold everyone over until 3 is launched around the holidays. Finally, I will have Fei Long at my disposal again! Entwa tha Dwagon!

I can't believe I got reduced to a background graphic! If I'm not in Alpha 3, I'm gonna eat those stupid X-men!



-konani



## Capcom Keeps the 2D Moving and Grooving

In a world where polygons, light source shading, rotoscoped this and anti-aliased that, it's nice to know that a company like Capcom still holds 2D animation so high in their standards. Not including *Street Fighter EX*, Capcom's future line up of arcade titles will be all 2D. Releasing the *SF Collection* only strengthens our belief in how much better 2D fighters are. But it also raises an idea. Why stop at *SF*? Why stop at classics like *Galaga*(Namco) and *Tempest*(Williams)? Bring back ALL the historic 2D games! Imagine if you will: The *Capcom Classic Pack*, featuring *Strider*, *Final Fight*(extra option: 3 Player Mode), *Street Fighter I*, *Mercs*, and *U.N. Squadron*. Or what about the *Konami Classics*? A disk of both *TMNT* games, *Sunset Riders*, and *Bucky O'hare*(all 4 player bliss) would be freaking awesome. Make it a RAM Cartridge CD and I'd have it pre-booked. This may seem crazy, but with my current choice of *Crow*, *Batman Forever*, and *Perfect Weapon*, you can see the method of my madness.

-Danger Boy



# SEGA SATURN REVIEWS

## MANX TT

There is only one word to describe both versions of *Manx TT Superbike*; intense! I have fond memories of being sore after ten rounds on the deluxe coin-op (you know, the one that took a little muscle to snap over into a bend! I wonder if I could fit one into my bedroom?) While Tantalus' port loses much of the graphic splendor of its arcade counterpart, the Saturn version of *Manx* still holds on tight to the game's trade-mark intensity! This is one of the few games that still makes my palms sweat and that is quite an accomplishment considering that I have been playing games for eleven years now!

Let's talk about graphics. I feel that *Manx* is merely average for a Saturn game. (Below average if you've seen the shots of Sega's *Touring Car Championship*. It's kin' amazing, but I digress...) It does move at 30 fps and this provides an accurate sensation of speed. It was supposed to be in high-res

and while it would have been nice, it doesn't affect the game significantly. Pop-up is present but infrequent and you can see well into the distance. There is also some slow-down when a lot of bikes are on screen at once, but it probably helps more than it hinders. The tracks are straight from the arcade unit and this game has both Castrol WSB (World Superbikes for those of you who are unaware of this world's greatest sport) Hondas, Suzuki GSXRs, and a few Ducati 916s. Actually, the game only has Honda's (the Suzukis are just pallet swaps and the Ducatis are Honda's with dual exhausts underneath the seat) but most players wouldn't notice such detail anyway.

The gameplay is typical for a good racing game. This title is peculiar in that the standard pad works well for bikes with poor handling (green #10 for example) and the analog pad works well with bikes that have good handling (the

#1 plated Castrol Honda). Heaven must be the only place that has racing games without invisible walls on each side of the track (*Rage Racer* anyone?). *Manx* actually has walls but luckily the bikes just bounce off of them. I just wish someone would bend the rules! Another annoyance is that in addition to being a complete motha' to beat, the computer's cycles run into you and slow you down. Hmm... luckily this practice has yet to catch on in actual WSB competition. Another area in which *Manx* lacks is available tracks. Two courses with mirrored versions for a total of four just don't cut it for a console game.

But the game is **intense**! This is honestly one of the games I pick up most to just have fun with. Two player mode is an absolute blast and "friendly" games go out the window once the sheep code is put in. It is quite difficult but I think it may almost make the experience more enjoyable because the game pushes you to go faster and not screw up. Some hidden bikes are present and an extra mode (Superbike) will appear after you complete the normal "Saturn" version and this helps add replay value. Overall, it is years ahead of *Hang-On GP* (ahh... the horror) and by far the best motorcycle racing game that I have ever played. I just can't help but think what might have been if this one had been handled in house. So until Sega releases a sequel I'll keep on playing *Manx*. It's worth it just to hear Melon yell "Maaannnnxxxxx Teeeeeeeeeee Teeeeeeeeeee Sooooouuuupppaaa Biko"

### *Manx TT Super Bike*

Sega/Tantalus

1-2 Players

3D Pad Compatible

Overall Review: 82%

-Konani





# PLAYSTATION REVIEWS

## Shooter, Shooter, Everywhere!

After a serious drought, Namco and Taito deliver the goods with three action crammed titles.

### ***Ace Combat 2* is a more than worthy sequel.**

Namco is and has been one of the premiere developers for the Playstation. In their long history of games, only *CyberSled* failed to please me. The *Ridge/Rage Racer* games are my favorite racing series of all time, *Soul Edge* proved their graphic power, and now *Ace Combat 2* is ready to show that Namco is still king of the Playstation.

The premise is simple: you are part of a secret airforce squad that is being supplied by the military. You are sent on various missions, ranging from land and sea dogfights, installation bombing, and city destruction (heh heh). There are 18+ missions, and several times you are given a choice of two different paths.

The graphics are unbelievably gorgeous. From the pure "Top Gun" opening, to the jaw dropping night city and coast line, Namco has out done themselves again. There's a stage where it's gloomy and raining, and as you move, the rain drops actually conform and shift to the direction you're going. Also, there is NO POP UP! None. There's a whole city in front of you, and not one building is flickering, not one mountain disappearing. The programmers

are to be commended for the attention to detail and layout.

The music is standard rock and roll fare, and the sound effects are remixed, redone versions from the first game, with a few more phrases here and there.

The difficulty is pretty good, with enemies being quite the pain on even the easy setting. These range from aircraft carriers, to B-52's, to tanks, to stealth planes and even submarines. The HUD display gives you the planes distance, type, and even the pilots's name if it's an ace pilot!

Also, those blessed with the flight stick or Japanese Dual Analog will be in for a great ride. Each plane responds to the stick according to that plane's stats. The Dual analog's vibration pack is alive and kicking in *Ace 2*. Depending on what hits you, you'll get a different degree of vibration. A cool accessory for an even cooler game.

*Ace Combat 2* is exactly what a sequel should be. Better in every department, has all new challenges, and can still retain that one important ingredient that it's older brother had; fun.

*Ace Combat 2* (Import)  
Namco  
1 player

Available Now (Import)  
US Date (unknown)  
Overall Review: 88%

-Danger Boy

### **The Xevious before the 'Storm...**

**Melon takes a look at the space side of shooting.**

After a prodigious debut with *Philosoma*, shooters on the Playstation all but vanished. It seemed like all we would be getting were those behind-the-ship games like *Total Eclipse Turbo* and *Novastorm*. Given the current emphasis on all things three dimensional, it makes sense that shooters are not coming out at breakneck speed.

However, this will all change with the release of *RayStorm* and *Xevious 3D/G+*. These two games combine the best of horizontal shooters with some snazzy 3D graphics.

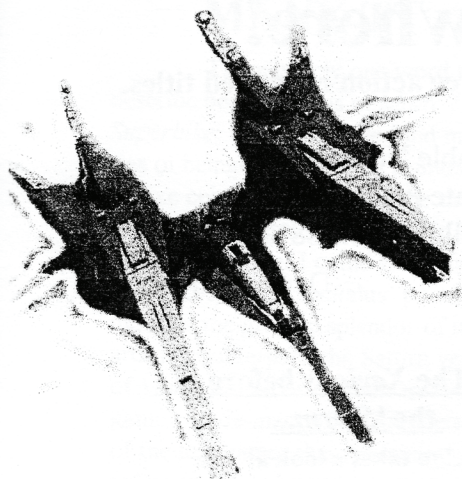
## ***Raystorm***

Take *Layer Section*, released here on the Saturn as *Galactic Attack*, and combine it with the classic Sega CD game *Silpheed*, and you have *RayStorm* - one of the finest shooters I've played in quite some time. Played on a 3/4 view, *RayStorm* takes you through 8 stages of fast-paced shooting action.

Guess what? Earth's colonies have joined forces to take control of our shiny blue home. And, geez, massive space fleets just couldn't stop them. What to do, what to do? Well,



# PLAYSTATION REVIEWS



how about take the odds and ends off a dozen or so enemy ships, slap them together, and hope the result can wipe them out - if it doesn't fall apart along the way? Yeah, this game won't win any awards for its storyline, but who really cares what motivates the pilots you're blowing into jelly?

Story aside, *RayStorm* excels in almost every other respect. The first thing that stands out are, obviously, the graphics. Gorgeous texture-mapped polygon graphics abound in this game. Enemies are highly detailed and numerous - it's rare to see the same one in two stages. Some of them even transform into robots! Don't even get me started on the bosses. Let's just say that they put in some serious overtime with these guys. The last stage, in fact, consists only of the last boss. The backgrounds deserve special mention, as they really shine in this game. From the opening city battle, to the ocean with realistic waves, to the intense asteroid field, *RayStorm*'s gives you some excellent backdrops.

Gameplay itself is straightforward, yet effective. *RayStorm* features the lock-on weapon introduced in *Layer Section*. Simply pass the crosshairs in front of your ship over any enemy, lock on, and fire. This is in addition to your normal forward weapon! It gives the game more of a 3-D feel, seeing as how you can hit enemies in the background that you can't hit any other way. Power-ups enable you to increase the strength of your normal and lock-on weapons, along with increasing the number of lock-ons you can fire. You have one "super attack" which, thankfully, is recharged with every hit of your lock-on weapon. An interesting

feature is the ability to combo your lock-on attacks. The more targets you hit with a single release, the more points! *RayStorm* takes a different approach when it comes to weapon selection, however. Instead of giving you one ship and allowing you to choose different weapons via power-ups, you choose at the beginning of the game, and every time you continue, between two distinct versions of the R-Gray. One has a normal shot weapon and lock-on lasers and is a good choice for the beginner. The second features powerful, but narrow in range, forward lasers, and this funky lightning lock-on weapon. Some may find this too limiting, but I happen to think that this is a great idea. First, you don't have to worry about taking the wrong weapon power-up mid-battle and getting screwed. Second, lasers and normal shot are usually the only two weapons worth bothering with in a shooter anyway.

Another place where *RayStorm* shines is in the music. Its soundtrack features some excellent techno-electronic tracks which fit the action perfectly. A few include some funky overtones and inspired instrument selections. And, of course, the grandiose, symphonic ending boss music is not to be missed. However, that's just the beginning. *RayStorm* includes, along with the original arcade version, an "Extra" mode. This is a variation on the game, rather than a whole new one. Mainly, it consists of some differences in enemy attack patterns, graphic changes (the first stage takes place at dusk, not at noon), and a new ending. The best part though, is the chance to pick a remixed version of the music. The remix is just as good, if not better than the original mix. It really goes off in its own direction when compared to traditional shooter music, running the gamut from Caribbean beats to an ending theme in French! Very cool.

With all these great things, what could one possibly have to complain about? Unfortunately, there are some flaws which really detract

from this game. The opening comparison to *Silpheed* is, sadly, much too exact. Those who played it will remember that, aside from the pretty graphics, you were really just playing over one big movie that, only at certain points, could you actually interact with. The same feeling is there when you play *RayStorm*. Don't get me wrong, the shooter itself is great, I just wish you could have more to do with the background! It pans, zooms, and scales, but your ship still remains trapped in that plane. In fact, *Silpheed* actually had MORE background interaction! Aside from one opening pan around your ship, you're forever stuck there.

Another thing *Silpheed* had that *RayStorm* sorely lacks are intermissions. The opening and ending of *RayStorm* show that great looking scenes can be made using only the game graphics. I don't know why the programmers opted out of this. Intermissions would have been a really welcome break after a few stages.

Speaking of rest, that's one thing that you won't get in *RayStorm*. Folks, there's a reason why the options screen features the ability to change the difficulty for each stage all the way down to very easy. *RayStorm* is one hard blaster even then. I think part of it stems from the graphics. Everything is so great looking and texture-mapped that...well, things start to blend into each other. Half the time I can't find myself in the screen. It also doesn't help that the enemies are fast and furious, and that the bosses took advantage of Wal-Mart's closeout sale on gigantic homing lasers. Sheesh.

Even with these faults, *RayStorm* still gets a high rating in my book. It's an overall excellent shooter, and God knows Playstation owners have been waiting for one for too long.

## *Raystorm*

Taito/Working Designs

1-2 Players

Overall Rating: 93% (Import)

## *Xevious 3D/G+*

All right, I admit it. I am a *Xevious* nut. I loved it back in '83, when I was so short I had to use a stool to reach the controls. I devoured the first home version



# PLAYSTATION REVIEWS

on the old Atari 7800. I even got addicted to *Xevious Arrangement* from *Namco Arcade Classics Vol. 1*. So, you've got to understand that this review will be more than a little biased towards this game. *Xevious 3D/G+* is the latest release from Namco, the Playstation powerhouse. They've showed their mastery of 3-D fighting in *Tekken2* and *Soul Blade*, and they've showed that they know how to make a killer racing game with *Rage Racer*. Does *Xevious 3D/G+* show that they hold sway over shooters as well? The answer is...uhm, not exactly.

Please, don't get me wrong when I say this. I really enjoy playing this game, and the three others included as a bonus, but you know that Namco was not trying to make this a ground-breaking shooter - at least, I don't think they were.

*Xevious 3D/G+* contains 4 separate games; the arcade *Xevious 3D/G* from last year, the aforementioned *Xevious Arrangement*, and the classics *Xevious* and *Super Xevious*. Since I'm fairly certain most of you are familiar with the last three games - *Xevious Arrangement* is your basic *Xevious* with better graphics and sound - I'll concentrate on *Xevious 3D/G*.

*Xevious 3D/G* takes the series where it's never been before - the third dimension (I'm not counting the 1991 arcade game *Solvalou*, since it was a first-person spinoff and not really in the "canon" of the series). Those aliens are back again, and it's up to you in your lone *Solvalou* fighter to show them what happens when you mess with the Earth so many times.

Play takes place over 7 stages, featuring all of the same familiar enemies from previous games. The crosshairs bombing remains intact, with one added element - your bombs are guided now. This kind of disappointed me, since precision bombing was part of the challenge. Also, how exactly are bombs supposed to "home"? Must have got them from the same place that makes homing lasers. Another new touch are the power-ups. *Xevious Arrangement* first introduced the ability to up your laser by one notch, but *Xevious 3D/G* brings in three different weapons; homing lasers, regular shot, and laser. However, these too are disappointing. The homing lasers are way too weak, even when you've maxed them out. The only edge they have

over the other weapons is they make finding the hidden silos, of which there are many, easier. The regular weapon is also too weak, and it's spread out so far that it's basically useless. Only the laser, as per most shooting games, is good. I would have liked to see a way to power-up your bombs instead.

The shooting itself is quite good, in my opinion. It seems like the programmers opted to retain the feel of the original game, so the action doesn't really get hot and heavy until the later stages. Even so, it's not exactly a cake walk either, although veteran shooters may want to up the difficulty a notch. *Xevious* fans will note that all of their favorite enemies are back and, for the most part, follow their original patterns. There's a smattering of new enemies to keep you guessing, though, so beware. The bosses are a mixed bag - some are much harder than others - and are a little boring (Giant cannon thing? Check. Big battleship? Check.) although the spider version of the Andora Genesis has to be seen to be believed.

*Xevious 3D/G*'s graphics keep the retro theme that Namco was striving for intact. *Solvalou* and almost all of the enemies are done in flat-shaded polygons. The only texture-mapping is in the backgrounds, and those are in pretty basic colors. Don't look for any fancy stuff here, but I happened to like the game's sparse look - it really does keep with the *Xevious* theme. Also, unlike *RayStorm*, this shooter makes good use of its 3-D graphics. Of course, there is the ability to bomb ground targets. Along with that, though, are some nice graphical touches. For instance, the background is constantly moving about in synch with your ship. While slight, it does enhance the

3-D feel. Also, the camera angle shifts about several times, and takes you with it - very cool. Another plus are the movies. I don't know, I just love seeing a rendered *Solvalou* flying about. Plus, we FINALLY get to see just why the heck that Nazca line phoenix was in all of the games!

Music is another one of *Xevious 3D/G*'s good points. While the arcade mix is fairly unremarkable, the remixed music is excellent. The opening stage features a nice update on the classic *Xevious* music, and the rest of the game has some great techno/house tunes. *Xevious Arrangement* also features a remixed and original music, but both are pretty average. It sounded much better coming out of an arcade speaker somehow.

Okay, so you're probably wondering what exactly my overall view of this game is. I still like it a whole lot, but I am going to temper my rating a bit to reflect what the non-*Xevious* fanatic in me would give it. I've got to say that if you, like me, are a hardcore nut about *Xevious*, it's an instant buy. If you're just shopping for a shooter, rent it first. I guess it really is a matter of tastes.

*Xevious 3D/G+*(Import)

Namco

1-2 players

Available now (US and Import)

Overall Review: 81%





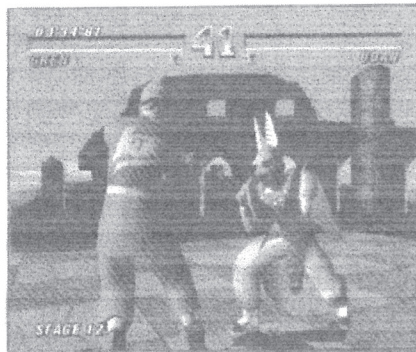
# PLAYSTATION REVIEWS

## RAVE REVIEW

### **Tobal No. 2: 3D fighting 'Squared'**

If there was one game that will stand out as the perfect 3D fighter of 1997, Tobal No. 2 is it. One can not calculate the wonder and awe inspiring moments that 2 can bring to a gamer's life. Coupled with the new dual analog controller, this is a match made in heaven.

This time around, two new contestants, Chaca(a female space marine) and Doctor V, join the tournament. The returning warriors have all been given graphic overhauls, and a plethora of new moves, including Hom's Helicopter Kick and Epon's combo ending back elbow. So how many is a plethora? Pretty much pushing any direction and a button will give you a different move. Do the same for a different attack button, hold guard and



do it for throwing options. And then there's the fireball attacks, the shining combos, and the charge moves. Plethora is an understatement.

The character graphics have leaped to jaw dropping. The squares of No. 1 have been replaced with perfectly shaded, curved figures. They've almost doubled in size, to the point that two Norks don't fit on the same screen! There's even a code to make them five times their normal size, with no in-fight

flicker! This did cost a little in the way of background 3D objects, but believe me, you don't notice.

The music is also more enjoyable this time around. It's still a little wierd, but it does keep your ears happy. The RPG music is really nice, and the sound effects now come in droves. Hom actually has a different 'gizmo' sound for almost every move!

The control and button layout is still the same(why fix what ain't broken, I guess) and when combos are performed, you now get a meter a la SF2 for hit count. As mentioned earlier, there seems to be 'shining combos.' I haven't nailed it down yet, but I think these might be the key to figuring out possible pre-programmed combos (like *KI Gold* or *Tekken 2*'s 10 hit moves).

The difficulty is another story. Many people complained about the first *Tobal* being too easy. Dream Factory listened, maybe a little too well. Even on the lowest setting, there were times that I almost launched my controller through the window. The bosses are a nightmare on hard(Nork can bash you out of the ring from dead center in TWO HITS!), and at the most in-opportune times the computer will pull off the shining combos and fireballs.

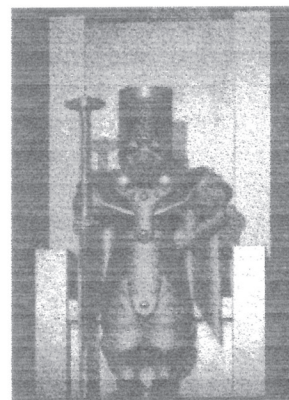
The Quest mode is also mislabeled. This ain't no mini dungeon set. This is a full fledged 3D action RPG. You'll need gold, potions, talk to people, etc. I'm actually waiting for a walk through to come in due to it's difficulty. But the coolest is the first reward(the only RPG one I have so far). You get to play as *Final Fantasy VII*'s Chocobo! Complete with his *FF VII* music, our little bird friend would be Square's version of the Daytona Car from *Fighter's Megamix*. You can also capture and use the RPG's enemies in the fighting engine.

The final icing on the cake is the options. You can customize the colors of your fighters, record any fight and store it(and retain a TON of them), name the fight, have the game record the last two hits of each fight in the tournament mode, and then watch them at the end, and it has the best training mode yet. How the heck this thing stores all this in 1 block of memory is beyond me. This is a dream (factory) come true, and a must import for anyone who considers themselves a real fighting game fan.

Now the bad news. As of this printing, Sony of America and Square have no plans to release this here. It seems No. 1 didn't do well enough to warrant the sequel. THIS MUST NOT STAND. If you value your Playstation, write,e-mail, fax, sky write, do anything you can to get Sony to release this Square given gift. Or you'll miss out on an incredible game.

**Tobal No. 2**  
Square/Dream Factory  
1-2 Players  
Dual Analog Compatible  
Final Review 98%

-Hyper Danger Boy





# SEGA SATURN REVIEWS

A game, and a Saturn? It must be protoculture.

## Macross lands on the Saturn

Let me start by stating that *Macross* is my all-time favorite anime and definitely one of the greatest animes of all time. So, each and every *Macross* game is waited for with great anticipation and I was thrilled when the Saturn version was released. This game follows the story of *Macross* the movie and splits its focus on both cinemas and the actual game. This results in a very *Cybernator* like game which is somewhat unique and a real treat for any *Macross* enthusiast.

The gameplay is somewhat diverse for a side-scrolling shooter. *Macross* features enemies that can scale in and attack from multiple depths, a three weapon system with each weapon having two options, the *Macross* storyline, tons of cinematics, all of the Valkyrie variants, all three Valkyrie modes with variability and the "holee motha" of \$%#, death to all Zentraedi missile barrage" weapon, and more! But it still is just a really fancy side-scrolling shooter. *Macross* has its moments, but it is definitely not the most intense shooter you will ever play.

I have never played a game quite like *Macross*. This title places a strong emphasis on following the story with frequent dialog boxes (accompanied by voice acting for each character) and many tremendously well done cinematics. Wait until you see some of the rendered sequences featuring the SDF-1 and some of the Zentraedi mother ships. Eye balls pop out on springs and saliva quickly accumulates on the lower lip! Many parts of the story even occur during the actual gameplay. During one level, containing both horizontal and vertical elements, Max and Miriya battle it out in the background while you

leisurely blow an alarming number of alien invaders out of the sky. Very cool indeed!

Graphics and sound are *Macross*' forte'. This title is absolute 2D beauty and just as much fun to watch as it is to play. Likewise, the sound is directly from the anime soundtrack and *Macross*' music is special. Your Saturn will rock once you pump this game on full blast. Missile barrages from Valkyrie's are incredibly well done and there are also some truly wicked special effects! The True Motion video clips directly from the movie are a great bonus and an added treat. (One that resulted in *Macross* being a two disk set!) Sometimes there is so much on-screen that it is hard to tell what is going on and other times you are just floating along by yourself. That's *Macross*' bag, baby!

What we have here is a great title for the *Macross* enthusiast and a pretty decent shooter for those who couldn't care less. (If anyone is in the latter group you are missing out on one of the world's best pieces of science fiction and you should check it out ASAP!) The gameplay does have some diversity and it's a treat to go through the game but unless you're a die-hard *Macross* fan one or two times through will be plenty. It's not especially difficult to complete. As a game it deserves around a 75 but as an experience for those who love *Macross* it is easily a 91. An average will give us a total score of 84. This is a fantastic offering from Bandai Visual and a worthy addition to any Saturn line-up! If Minmei can't get you to save the universe, you might as well be

Valkyrie cannon fodder!

**Macross** (import only)

Bandai

1 Player

2 CDs

Overall Review: 84%

-konani





# NINTENDO 64 REVIEWS

## StarFox 64 Rumbles In...

If one only knew how hard of a review this is for me. I love *Starfox*. I played it like there was no tomorrow on Super Nes. I built the Arwing models from an old Nintendo Power, and so on. I remember the first time we played it, years ago in my basement, we actually dodged and weaved with the ship. But that was so long ago, and now the sequel is before me. Or is it?

*Starfox 64* is another great rerun in Nintendo's ever rerunning line up. *Mario Kart*, *Wave Race*, and *Pilotwings* were all real pretty versions of the same game. *Starfox* is no different. Same cast, same map, just new enemies and graphics.

The graphics are of course, beautiful, and there are some really special effects (like the lava and smart bombs) that grace the game. The Arwings have good detail to them, and little things like water splashing if a smart bomb is too close and the trails your ship leaves also compliment the game. The stages are nice, and the new 360 degrees stages are cool, with some neat spoofs of *ID4* and the Japanese Anime *Gundam*. My only gripe was that on certain space stages (like the last one), the anti aliasing screws up the fade in technique, thus making it look like there's a small 'void' in front of you.

This time around, the characters actually talk (you know, not the usual 'wubble, bulla, wulba' noise) to you, giving little hints here and there, and the enemy pilots even drop in a line from time to time. The game music is fair, with only the boss music and opening theme music standing out in my mind. Sound effects are above average, with standard explosion sounds and laser fare.

The 3D stick is used for control this time around, and works quite well. The Z and R buttons are used for barrel rolling, which leaves

you temporarily invincible when performed. This is a life saver when going against the Rouge StarFox team, and a must use technique against certain bosses. The 'pilot's view' is a neat feature, but the viewing window is too small, and it feels like your stuck inside a box. The other new control features are looping, half loop turns, and a charge shot, which can lock on an enemy.

The game itself is relatively easy, the only problems being certain enemies and bosses. Also, in order to reach the other stages, tasks must be performed on the stage before it. This ranges from getting a certain score to hitting railroad signs to flying through multiple warp gates. A cool little aspect is that when you reach a boss, you'll see the stage you'd normally go to in the distance, just like it looks on the map.

The new 4 player mode is another plus for the cartridge. Done much better than *Mario Kart*, you haven't lived until you've fought through a horde of enemies

with your friends, in pure *ID4* style. This is really what the system was made for, and it's a shame games like *Doom* didn't use it.

The final part of *StarFox* is the Rumble Pak. This is a little gizmo you place inside the memory card slot of your controller. When hit, the controller 'rumbles' at different degrees, depending on what hit you. It's more a pager type vibration than rumble, but a great little feature and bonus for buying the game.

So is *Starfox* worth it? Yes. This is Nintendo's best game since *Mario* and *Wave Race*, and the 4 player mode is definitely worth the price of admission. I just wish it had been a little more original.

***StarFox 64 (With Rumble Pak)***  
Nintendo  
1-4 Players  
Final Review: 92%

-Hyper Danger Boy





# NINTENDO 64 REVIEWS

## Avoid Being Chosen...

*War Gods* isn't exactly a gift from the heavens.



### GRAVE REVIEW

Hi, Danger Boy here in the Game Rave Time Travel Room. Today we'll be traveling to the think tanks of Midway Games. At the moment they are currently planning the game *War Gods*. Let's get in the machine, travel back, and listen in. {really cool warp sound effect}

"...so with *MK4* being in the early stages of development, we need a game to tide people over till then. What should we do?" A little man in plaid pants and wearing a pocket protector stands up.

"Sir! How about *Cruis'n for Chicks*? We need only add the women to the first game's engine, and woala! Instant driving game! It worked with the background trick in *Cruis'n the World*!" The man giving the questions thinks, and shakes his head. A third man

stands, wearing a 'I {heart} my Noob' shirt, sweating from a hard minute of thinking. His eyes go wide.

"Sir...I've GOT it! Okay, check this out. Remember those character designs we threw out a while ago? Well, I've been spending the company's budget on this idea for a new twist on the extra button theory! Okay, we've got the run button, we've got the block button, so how about a 3D button! We'll make it extra large so it doesn't look as stupid as it sounds. And then...and then we take those wire frame models that the *MK4* team threw out, and we'll wrap those designs around them! Yeah, and to save time in the programming stage, instead of pallet swapping ninja characters, we'll just give everybody the same moves! We can borrow the *MK3* combo system from file storage, and to save more time, we'll only give each character one fatality!" He wipes the sweat from his brow, still shaking with excitement. He flips his notepad for the rest of his report. The big cheese looks worried.

"But what about the endings? Players want to know what happens to the character." Noob boy begins to wet himself.

"But that's the BEST part! We simply give everyone the SAME ENDING! Same screen, same paragraph, we just swap the character picture! In fact, we've already finished the N64 version. We even saved time by not putting ANY moves in the manual! Here, check it out!" A door opens, and

this ...thing that looks like it went through a Beanie Baby sale crawls in and places the product in the Big guy's hands, curls over and screams as he melts into the floor.

"Wow, we sure put those Eurocom programmers through heck, didn't we?"

The Noob chimes in with a shrug.

"I don't get it, we gave them free copies of *MK Trilogy 64* and *Cruis'n 64* as payment." The big guy smiles.

"No matter, we need someone to play test this and review it." They stop, all heads turn toward...me?! Their eyes go white, and flames emerge from the floor. They begin to chant, "YOU ARE CHOSEN!"

"NO, not me, not me! Quick, in the time machine before th...AGGHHHHHHH—

{bleep}"

[Editor's note: Hi, this is Melon. After the incident, DB was in a vegetable state for quite some time. However, our constant nursing and regular doses of *Tobal 2* and *Street Fighter Alpha 2* brought him back to his abnormal state. Please, don't let this happen to you.]

~~War Duds~~

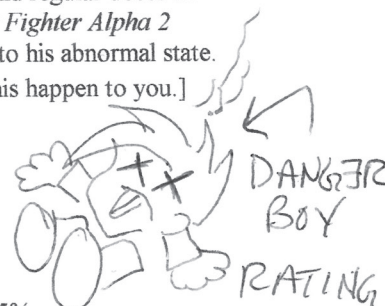
~~War Gods~~

Midway

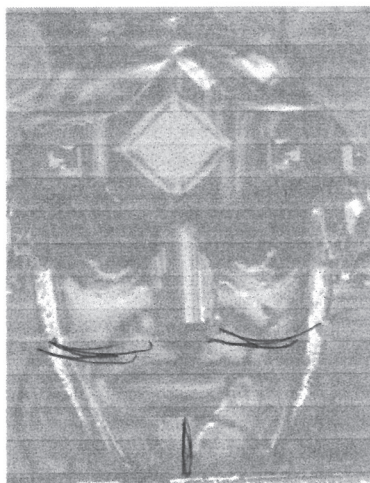
1-2 Players

Available now.

Overall Review: 35%



-Danger Boy





# RANTING AND RAVING...

## Are 3D fighters just Eye Candy?

While at the arcade the other day, I decided to try out Namco's popular *Soul Blade*. I lasted for four rounds as Taki but perished while trying to decipher the moves on the itty bitty stickers they put on the arcade units. Soon after, I found myself at a local store and decided to demo *Soul Blade* on the Playstation. After half an hour of play on the normal arcade mode, I beat the game twice. I continued three times the first time through and did not continue at all during my second try. Let me say now that the two versions are identical except that you can actually hear the music on the home version. Being a 2D Capcom/SNK purist I decided to share some of my thoughts on *Soul Blade* and 3D games in general.

Fundamentally, *Soul Blade* and most 3D fighters lack the gameplay that 2D delivers. I also have a theory about 3D fighting games. 3D graphics have given gaming a fresh look and have been good for the industry as a whole. But, every console unit has a controller that only works in two dimensions. Think about it! Up/down, left/right and the buttons are merely function keys. So, how can anyone play a 3D game. Simple, you can't yet. 3D games are just graphically different and a nice alternative from years of 2D graphics. Even games with so called "depth" just have function keys to change the plane your character is on\*\*. No cigar bub. So, what can we gain from 3D graphics? Quite simply, eye candy.

So, *Soul Blade* and every other 3D game so far have no excuse for less complicated gameplay than say a *Street Fighter* game. Let's look at a *Soul Blade* combo. KKK or KK forward and K. Hmm... that looks like button pounding to me. There's just not a whole lot of substance here. I can not review *Soul Blade* because I haven't spent enough time playing it. (But I would have given it a 72 in case you're interested!) But I was able to walk through the game in a matter of minutes and never lost to the three characters that beat me more than once, including *Soul Blade*. This is a title that would not entertain me over a long period of time. Unlike my favorite Capcom and SNK titles.

Now I am not trying to slag 3D fighting games. However, they are all clones of the only really good 3D fighting game, *Virtua Fighters*. *Virtua Fighters* has a ton of technique and many parts of its gameplay engine have been borrowed by almost every other 3D game that has followed. Not to mention as far as graphics are concerned VF 3 blows everything else away **period!** (Ed. note: I have not yet played *Tobal No. 2*, but *Tobal No. 1* did not impress me so I'm not expecting much from the sequel.\*\*)

I encourage all developers to enhance the gameplay features of their 3D fighting games. Maybe *Street Fighter EX* will lead the way. Until then, enjoy your 3D fighters but do not forget their short-comings next time you shell out \$50+ to watch polygons move. For the many fans of *Soul Blade*, do not worry, I understand! Taki, now that's animation!

-Konani

\*\*I agreed with Konani up till these two points. Both *Tobal 1* and *2* feature true 3D movement. Pressing down actually moved you towards/ around the opponent, and up moved you into the background/around the opponent. *Tobal 2* did this even more successfully with the Dual Analog controller. As this went to print, Konani had not yet played *2*. Rest assured, Melon and I will be force feeding it to him(just as he'll whup our ass in *SFA2*). And about his *Soul Blade* comment. I must disagree. It's Sophitia...

-Danger Boy

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# RANTING AND RAVING...

## Is Your Nintendo 64 Purring?

If the N64 looked in the mirror, would it see the Jaguar as it's reflection? This occurred to me as I began writing next issue's system review. The similarities are becoming painfully obvious, and it's beginning to scare me. Both are 64 Bit cartridge based systems. Both have funky controllers, one having a key pad, one having the memory card slot and 3D stick. Both had little to no games at launch, and both advertising slogans wanted you to do something (the math for Jag, and 'change your system' for N64). Both systems had their best game packed with system, and new games took forever and a day to come out. The Jag suffered from rehashed, slightly revamped 'sequels', and Nintendo seems to be doing the same thing (only the graphics are much better). The Jaguar's final nail in the coffin was it's CD add on, with possibly the world's smallest game library. The N64's 64DD, or "bulky drive", has been pushed back to next year, and doesn't even hold a fourth of the info a CD can. It's major selling point is the 'rewritable disk games' that would be made, but this makes it sound like nothing more than a fancy zip drive. No games were playable for it at E3, and some titles that were being made for it, like *Dragon Warrior 7*, have been dropped or moved to Playstation.

Secondly, during the systems major pre-launch hype, everything was 'quality over quantity'. But with *MK Trilogy*, a censored *Cruis'n*, *War Gods*, and *Killer Instinct 2* (I don't care what the label says, there's nothing gold about it), it seems that that's not entirely true. Granted, Saturn and Playstation each have their respected logs, but if your system only has 16 games, the above means that 25% of the available games suck. And of the rest, only 2 or 3 can truly be called classics.

And what of the promised games at launch, like *Mission Impossible*, *Golden Eye*, and *Griffey*? Pushed back, or not coming out till way late. A trend that's beginning to follow all the games coming out for the system.

The Jaguar was never able to dig itself out of the hole it dug, and with Nintendo, they seem to be on that fine line between hole and solid ground. Every time it looks bleak for them, they release a good game that counter balances the bad game dilemma. The examples being *Wave Race* and *StarFox*.

But what about the next great Nintendo 64 game? *Zelda* isn't coming out till NEXT SPRING, and there's still no sign of *Metroid*, *Kid Icarus*, or even *Donkey Kong*. Can the common gamer wait another year before taking on *Zelda*? And what about other RPG's for the system? So far it seems bound for *Doom* clones and Mario wannabee's. What about sports?

And what about the 2D problem with *MKT* and *KI2*? After watching *MK* move, it becomes suspicious that the *KI* backgrounds might have been done in 2.5D so the system could handle it. Also, what about the cartridge limitations? Both games were missing frames, *KI*'s character's were not exactly crisp, and *MK*'s music was putrid at best. Is the 64 doomed to all 3D games, as Sony seems to be trying to do? That's how it looks like so far.

However, Nintendo does have one ace up their sleeve. Kids. With the cartridge, and the 'Nintendo' name itself, they have a foot hold with parents and kids alike. Cartridges are a bit more durable than the CD, and the brand name is still a sure thing at Christmas time. But this still doesn't help the limited library. Or the cruddy games. Or the price of the cartridges.

But will history repeat itself? Nintendo faces the same competition from Sony now that they faced with Sega in the 16 Bit era. Nintendo was able to maintain themselves as Sega went add-on crazy. But Sony shows no sign of going that route. And they've already proved that they have more games and lower prices.

The conclusion? Unknown. Nintendo is slowly (make that *very* slowly) forming a true library of games, and now that they have a major company (Konami) doing games, they may just pull out of this situation yet. I just hope this time around somebody is doing the math *correctly*.

-Danger Boy

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# LOST TREASURES...

## *Demon Castle DRACULA X: The Rondo of Blood*

Once in a while, very special games come out. These are the games that developers talk about and gamers hunt for. One such game is Konami's *Dracula X* for the PC Engine Duo. *Dracula*, despite its age, is still one of the finest games to ever appear on a home console. Couple its greatness with the title's Japanese only release and you can soon begin to understand why gamers have been known to pay \$120+ for the privilege of owning this game. I happen to be one of the few individuals fortunate enough to own a copy and there is no amount of money that could ever make me sell it (don't forget me!-DB).

I still remember the crisp November morning when the Fed Ex man pulled into the driveway with my first import game. A chill in the air complemented the gloomy, over-cast view of the sky. Perfect weather for vampire hunting! Luckily enough, I had the day off of school and I quickly disappeared into the depths of my bedroom for an extended chat with Nosferatu. Before the days of 32-bit, this game displayed some of the most beautiful, hand drawn art ever seen in an electronic adventure. The pentagrams, crosses, and viles of Holy Water all pulled me into this near perfect Konami adventure.

Once the game's audio began to reach my ears, my mouth hit the floor, causing an impact that could have sent California into the ocean. Never before had I heard such a perfect soundtrack. Never before had I such desire to listen to game music when not actually playing the game. I wonder if a finer piece of music shall ever again grace a CD intended for a home video game system. One year I even played *Dracula X* for mood music on Halloween. I received countless complements from both young trick-or-

treaters and elderly chaperones. Recently, I bought a surround-sound system (*Dracula X*'s audio tracks are recorded in RSS or Roland Surround Space) and once again the magic was re-created. This game deserves to be played on a descent stereo system to truly be appreciated. Buy the BGM and thank me later!

Then there is the game itself. Konami is known for it's Castlevania series and *Dracula X* maintains that fine tradition. The level design is so perfectly laid out that I have often stopped play just to ponder how much work went into creating this title. Multiple characters are at your disposal along with various other hidden characters that require rescuing. *Dracula*'s evil minions were wonderfully designed and complement the feel of the game in almost every way possible. The concept is simple, yet the quest is full of challenge, danger, and intrigue. Konami must have used black magic to create this title, especially on a system that used an eight-bit processor. U.S. Konami developers have actually been known to scour local game shops looking for this title. If that doesn't give a proper indication of its greatness then nothing will.

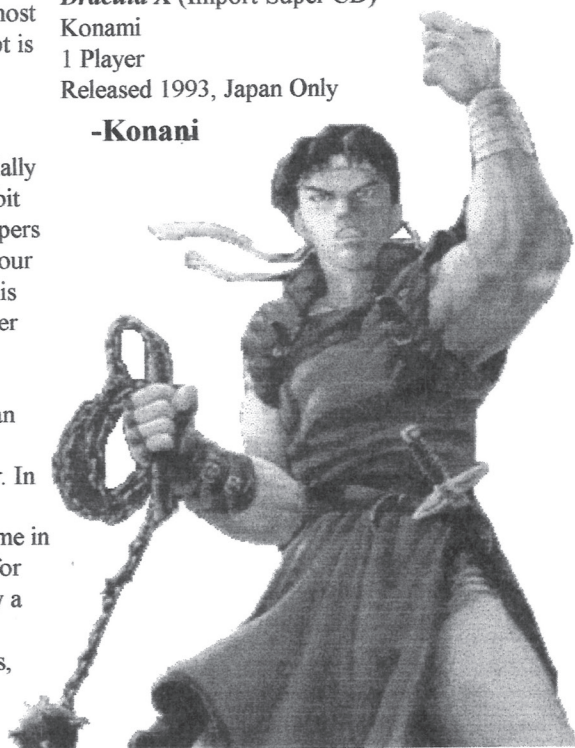
Playing *Dracula X* is an experience that should not be passed up by any serious gamer. In my opinion it has one of the greatest musical scores of all time in addition to being a bench-mark for Duo adventure games. It's truly a shame that this title was never released in the U.S. *Dracula X* is,



quite simply, pure gaming bliss. Thunder strikes and maidens beckon.... the prince of darkness is about to rise once again. Vlad the Impaler is on the loose and its up to me and my Turbopad to stop him. Let the symphony of death begin to play. Nosferatu is expecting dinner, and I plan on dropping by...

*Dracula X* (Import Super CD)  
Konami  
1 Player  
Released 1993, Japan Only

**-Konani**





## And now a quick look at your Game Rave staff...

### (as seen through the eyes of Konani)

**Danger-boy** (a.k.a. Ryoga ,Y. Storm) - an absolute gaming maniac. He is currently on a quest (no one knows why) to own a copy of every Turbo Grafx 16 game ever made. Also the world's biggest Square fan and master of the import version of *Final Fantasy VII*. In fact, he won't even let his fellow editors handle the jewel case. Danger-boy indeed. A tremendous game player in his own right, he definitely favors RPGs, likes fighting, and is into anything new or innovative. DB frequently serves as Konani's tackling dummy when playing one-on-one fighting games. The tables turn only when *Tobal* is put in. But DB can occasionally hang with Konani, especially when he's using his alter ego Blanka. (He's waiting Capcom!) The physical similarities are amazing. DB also happens to be an excellent artist and will be stuck doing most of Game Rave's glorious illustrations. DB also happens to be the world's largest walking gaming encyclopedia and can tell you useless information regarding almost every game ever created. He earned his nick-name (the hard way) by insisting that he likes the Sega CD/32X version of *Night Trap*. That and he's a sucker for anything Japanese (like his entire Virtual Boy library...) A true guru (and mad man) of gaming. Now if he could just do this well in college...

**Konani** (a.k.a. Blue-Thunder of Furikokan high school, Mr. PMS)- is our East coast affiliate. If you haven't figured it out already, he is a devout lover of his Saturn and the only American game he owns for it is the pack in disk. Konani favors Capcom and Konami games. Many people (the other editors) fear Konani, especially when he chooses Ken and Fei Long and unleashes his many ultra-powerful combos. Other favorites include: Haohmaru (Samurai Shodown), Spider-man, and Rogue. The weirdest title he is currently fond of is *Galaxy Fraulein Yuna Remix* (Hudson). In his spare time he is bumbling through college and he also loves riding his 95' Kawasaki ZX-6R Ninja. If you should see him at a Capcom coin-op at the local arcade politely introduce yourself and walk away; do not waste your quarter! He has practiced wasting DB for days on end, literally! The word Konani is actually gobbly-gook derived while playing *Castlevania Bloodlines*. We were unimpressed and came up with the cross between the words Konami (publisher of *Bloodlines*) and nani (what!? in Japanese) and thus we have KONANI! Konani is reachable at: [REDACTED] State subject as: Game Rave

**The Melon** (a.k.a. Mousse, Mista Bust a Cap in Yo' Ass) - the most intellectual of the group and another devout gaming nut. Mel is a master of the inter-net and is the web-master for the Animatrix web-site. Supreme *Tobal* fan boy and another Square junky. Mel and Konani frequently engage in intense Beavis/ Beavis arguments which result in breathlessness, lost voices, and often require frequent intervention. As soon as we can convince Mel to put up a Game Rave site we'll be happy. Mel is the shooter specialist of the group and he seems to be able to handle any shooter that he puts his mind to. No one can touch him on Sega's *Star Wars* arcade coin-op and he has most recently blown his way through the mind numbing *Raystorm*. Mel started playing video games while in the womb and is also the most knowledgeable of the editors about dirty things (American games) like A-T-A-R-I. He is famous for his late night one liners and the infamous "academic reputacion". Mel is also on his way through college, a Monty Python lover, MSTY 3000 watcher, history buff, and he does the best Ren Hoek impersonations this side of Stimpy. He also introduced the rest of the editors to the joy that is Japanese animation. You can visit him at [REDACTED]

## NEXT ISSUE:

- It's the Nintendo 64's One Year mark. Be there when we grade the system and it's games to date. We'll see if Nintendo themselves need to "change the system..."

-Namco's (Import)*Time Crisis* is the bomb! No wait, it's the GUN!

-Next month's Lost Treasure is just that; Treasure's *Gunstar Heroes*!



## Game Quote of the Month:

**"I've got vampire hunter's  
blood coursing through me.  
It's good to bleed a little."**

**- Richter Belmont  
From *Demon Castle Dracula X***



# **GAMERAVE**

**ALL THE RAVE!**